United Nations ST/IC/2006/30

Secretariat

16 August 2006

Information circular*

To: Members of the staff

From: The Assistant Secretary-General for Human Resources Management

Subject: **Outside activities**

1. The purpose of the present circular is to inform staff members of the Organization's procedures relating to outside activities, which are set out in administrative instruction ST/AI/2000/13.

Outside occupation or employment

2. The basic rule is that staff members shall not engage in any outside occupation or employment, whether remunerated or not, without the approval of the Secretary-General.

3. The first requirement for approval is that there be no conflict with the staff member's official functions or status as an international civil servant. The outside occupation or employment should not interfere with the staff member's ability to perform his or her duties or call into question his or her impartiality and independence as an international civil servant.

4. The second requirement is that the outside activity not be against the interest of the United Nations as, for example, working with an organization whose goals are incompatible with those of the United Nations or working in a capacity that would call into question the staff member's impartiality or independence.

5. The third requirement is that the outside occupation or employment be permitted by local law at the duty station or where the occupation or employment occurs.

6. Staff members authorized to engage in outside activities shall make clear to the organizers and participants in such activities, including any employers, that they act in their personal capacity and not as representatives of the United Nations.

Activities related to the United Nations

7. Unless they form part of the normal course of official duties, prior authorization is required for staff members to engage in any of the following acts, if they relate to the purpose, activities or interests of the United Nations:

* The present circular will be in effect until further notice.

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(a) Issuance of statements to the press, radio or other agencies of public information;

(b) Acceptance of speaking engagements;

(c) Taking part in film, theatre, radio or television productions;

(d) Submitting articles, books or other material for publication.

8. Outside activities that are of benefit to the Organization or the achievement of its goals and/or contribute to the development of professional skills of staff members are usually not only permitted but encouraged.

Other outside activities

Social or charitable activities and pursuit of studies

9. Private non-remunerated activities for social or charitable purposes not related to the staff member's official functions or to the United Nations and pursuit of studies may be engaged in at the staff member's discretion as long as those activities take place outside of working hours or while the staff member is on leave.

Political activities

10. Staff members may exercise the right to vote. Staff members should ensure that their participation in political activities does not reflect adversely upon their status as independent and impartial international civil servants. Staff members cannot thus be candidates for political office. Membership in a political party is permitted, provided it does not entail action or obligation to action that would reflect adversely on their status as international civil servants. In case of doubt as to whether the activity is permitted, enquiries may be made by the staff member concerned, as indicated in paragraphs 12 and 13 below.

Participation in boards, panels, committees, expert groups and similar bodies

11. Participation in boards, panels, committees, expert groups or similar bodies that are external to the Organization constitutes an outside activity that requires the prior approval of the Secretary-General. If, after approval has been granted, it appears that the staff member's participation would involve the consideration of the granting of an honour, gift or remuneration to a United Nations official, the staff member should withdraw from the body concerned since his or her participation would create at least the appearance of a conflict of interest.

Clarification procedures

12. Sections 6.1 to 6.5 of administrative instruction ST/AI/2000/13 set out procedures whereby a staff member may seek in confidence clarification as to whether a planned outside occupation, employment or activity would conflict with his or her status as an international civil servant.

13. Staff members are also reminded that the Ethics Office, which was established to assist the Secretary-General in ensuring that all staff members observe and perform their functions consistent with the highest standards of integrity required by the Charter of the United Nations, provides confidential advice and guidance to staff on ethical issues, including conflict of interest.

Approval procedures

14. Sections 6.6 to 6.9 of administrative instruction ST/AI/2000/13 set out the procedures to be followed by a staff member wishing to engage in an outside activity for which prior approval is required under sections 3 and 4 of the instruction.